Segment 7 – Goal Setting

Jenny Johnson, Ankeny School District's Director of Curriculum and Assessment, describes how groups used the results of data analysis to set goals.

If you take a look at the professional development model, you'll see that all the decisions that you make are to be based on data. You also see that we need a plan for comprehensive school improvement. We have married those things this year in our district, and we have had every building working on their building improvement plan, which then we pull together and make a district improvement plan. As part of Gary's plan for his building, they needed to decide what their goals were. So if you go to the professional development model, you know that any needs you identify have to come from data. To decide what the goals are going to be for a three to five year building plan, they started the focus groups, and then we decided to take a look at the data.

I put together an agenda for the groups that were coming over to district office. We had half days for each of the areas: reading, math and science. On the agenda I set things up as to our goals and then some questions that we were asking the groups.

We divided the staff coming from each group into two parts, so that I had one group looking at ITED and the other group looking at our pre/post test data. Then the goal was to bring the two groups back together to see if we had spotted the same things in each area. We wanted to celebrate the strengths from the testing, talk about how we think we got to that point, and then look for the areas of focus—where we felt we needed to do some extra work. We were doing that in two separate groups.

So on what we were doing on that day— that was our job—we came back and we brought the two groups together. We found, amazingly, that we found pretty much the same information from each group from looking at the ITED data and from looking at the pre/post test data.

We have the data sliced and diced in a bunch of different forms. Someone on our staff, who has been trained in Crystal Reports, produces reports for us in a certain way (he puts colors in that discriminate) that goes to each of the buildings. So we produce these for the buildings. The [reports] come out of central office, and they show what [students'] proficiencies are, and then they are divided. We go ahead and divide by gender, because the State wants to see that, even though No Child Left Behind does not. Then we divide by IEP, SES, and then—if we have a large enough group in any of the ethnic groups—we divide those out.

We looked at these for all kids and all sub-groups. That's the first piece of data that we looked at. We also, then, have the data split up into charts, so we can zero in on those groups and compare them to the whole. So for ITBS, we gave the first report, which was in general. We got deeper with this; we took a look at the item analysis from the ITED. Then we looked at that and said, "All right, this tells us a lot about skills, but what does this tell us about what we're teaching and what we're doing?"

I know the next term and the next thing I'm going to show you will probably get this "ugh, not again." I know in our district we have. But when we did the ITED process—everybody remember that?—these are the basic bench marks for eleventh

grade, which ITED in eleventh grade would be testing. We then went through on the ITBS, and we found out where each of those was tested and how many times. And then we had built already before ITED…(or ITAP??) came on board, we had put together assessments—the district's assessments that Joe is going to talk about for pre/post)—where we had already looked at the thing that ITAP asked us to do last year. And we had then built the district test to measure all of those benchmarks that are not measured on the Iowa Test of Educational Development.

So we took a look at this, took our ITEP results, went back, looked at the skills that were on the ITED, and found the ones that matched up with our benchmarks to see how we were doing on those. So we dug deeper to the skills that matched up with our benchmarks to see how our students were doing.

After we had done that, each group—math, reading, and science—came up with some areas in the ITED that they thought we needed to focus on. The other group, which Joe's going to talk about, did the same thing. But in this half day, I'm going to jump ahead for just a second here—after we looked at those and found that we had some areas of focus, then we needed to look at the professional development model again and say, "All right, where are we going to go from here?" Gary told you we had already done training in reading: Rachel Billmeyer strategies, the six traits in reading. So the group brainstormed, and put down the target benchmarks where we felt we needed to do some work. Then we said, "All right, what strategies have we already been trained in that we're using, that you know are making a difference?" They brainstormed those, told us how they knew it was making a difference, what they looked at in the classroom. And we came away with a set of strategies that these groups could go back to the staff and talk about.